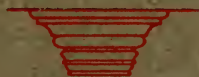
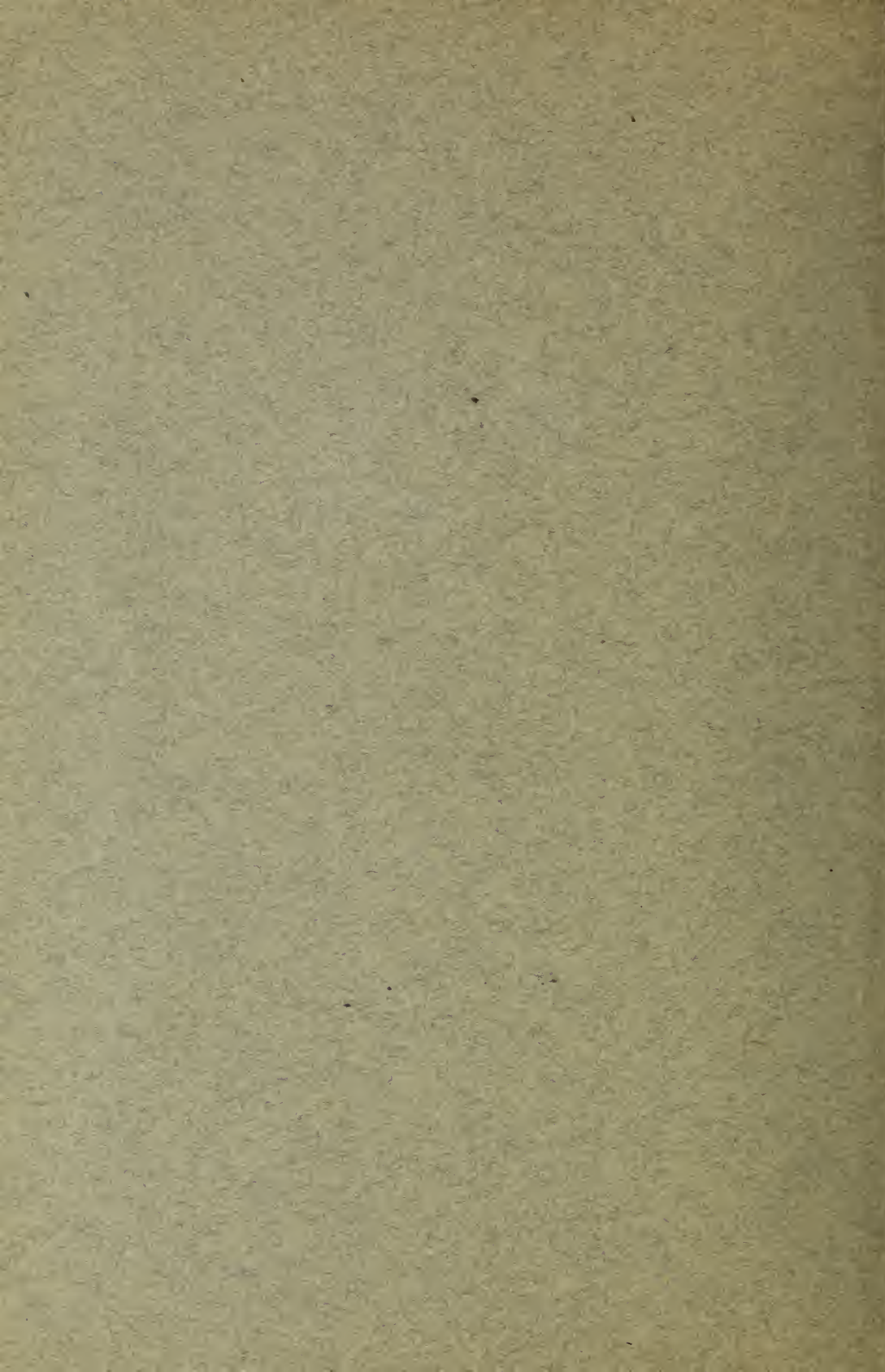




SAM DAVIS

**A True Story of a Young Confederate
Soldier Who Was Hanged After
Capture Because He Would
Not Betray a Secret of
His Commander**





THIS STORY OF SAMUEL DAVIS WAS
WRITTEN BY DR. H. M. HAMIL, AND IS
TRUE IN EVERY DETAIL, AND PORTRAYS
THE INTENSE FEELING WHICH EXISTED
IN THOSE STIRRING TIMES WHICH TRIED
MEN'S SOULS.

PUBLISHED BY
J. F. THOMPSON
GRIFFIN, GA.

PRESS OF
THE MILLS PRINTING CO.
GRIFFIN, GA.

THE BOY HERO OF THE WAR

And lo! thy matchless boy, O Tennessee!
With pinioned arms beneath the gallows tree,
Looked forth, unmoved, into the wintry skies,
The nut-brown ringlets falling o'er his eyes;
He, by kind gaolers, had been oft implored:
"Speak but one word! To freedom be restored!"
The lifted signal, "Hold," the messenger cried;
And, springing up, stood by the hero's side.
"My boy! This bitter cup must pass you by!
Too brave, too noble, and too young to die!
Your mother, father, sisters—when they learn—
Even now, perhaps, they wait your long return.
Speak out! Life is so sweet! Be free once more!"
'Tis he should bear this penalty and shame.
Live for your mother! Think a moment how"—
"Not with the brand of fraud upon my brow!
I and the 'culprit,' true, might both go free;
The broken pledge would haunt not him, but me.
How light soever what promise man may make,
Should be kept sacred for his honor's sake!
My mother!"
(And choking back the sob, but half concealed,
His head drooped low! At last must nature yield?)
"My mother!" flashed again the tear-dimmed eyes.
"At her dear knees she taught me how to die!
Her loving heart would be too sorely pained
If to her lips were pressed her boy's with falsehood stained."
"My brave, brave boy," the pleader spoke again;
"A boy in years, but worth a thousand men
Like him for whom, the coward, traitor, knave,
You'd lay your own brave, young life down to save.
Speak out! Life is so sweet! Be free apace more!"
"I never knew how sweet life was before!
Still—words are useless, General, but forgive—
You're kind; yet if I had a thousand lives to live,
I'd give them all ere I could face the shame
And wear, for one hour, a base, dishonored name."
The die was cast! Our tears were idle tears
For him, who gave one day and gained a thousand years!
Centuries on centuries shall go circling by,
But still he is not dead! SAM DAVIS cannot die!

SAM DAVIS

THE STORY OF AN OLD FASHIONED BOY.

SAM Davis was his name. He was born on a farm near the little town of Smyrna, Tenn. His parents were old-fashioned people, God-fearing, simple-mannered, neither rich nor poor; and Sam grew up in the quiet ways of the Southern country boy. Just as he had passed out of his teens, and was yet a big boy in face and spirit, he died on the gallows at Pulaski, Tenn., in the presence of Gen. Dodge's Corps of Federals.

Sam spent his boyhood days in the fields and under the great trees of his father's farm, companion with mocking bird and bee and butterfly, and with the patient brutes that serve the farmer's need. There was no hint of the hero to come in the peaceful, humdrum life of the farm. True, the war clouds were gathering above and the air was becoming electric with exciting speech and prophecy; and in every village was springing up a holiday soldiery, parading in glittering uniform to the sound of fife and drum.

Out of the tenseness of these stirring years that ushered in the great war Sam's strange heroism may have been fashioned; but I prefer to trace it back to the old-fashioned mother and father and the simple, sincere life of the boy of the Rutherford County farm. Somehow the old fable of Antaeus's strength coming back to him only when in contact with mother earth is often confirmed in the strength and heroism of the men who have come to greatness from the life of the farm.

When the war finally came, and drum and fife and soldier in a twinkling were transformed into the machinery of real battle, Sam

put aside his schoolbooks at Nashville, and bade good-by to the two teachers who, as Generals Bushrod Johnson and Edmund Kirby Smith, became distinguished soldiers of the Confederacy. He enlisted as a private in the 1st Tennessee Infantry, and soon found place of drudgery and danger in the army of General Bragg.

The life of the private soldier anywhere or at any time in real warfare is not a pathway of roses. Least of all, as the writer of his own experience can testify, was it a place of comfort in the

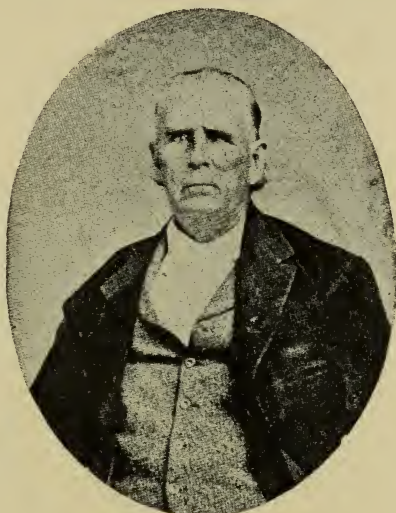


Sam's Mother

armies of the South. The flags that flashed forth their stars and bars so bravely were soon blackened by smoke and rent by bullet. The bright uniforms soon bore the marks of the clay hills and the camp fires and grew tarnished and torn. Even the martial music changed its note from the sparkle and rush of the "Bonnie Blue Flag" and the "Girl I Left Behind Me" to the minor tones of "The Years Creep Slowly By, Lorena."

General Bragg, whatever criticism may be put upon his generalship, was an insistent fighter, and his men were used to being

in the thick of battle. It was so with our boy Sam. The peace and beauty of the Smyrna farm gave place to the wearisome tramp, the pangs of hunger, the cries of the wounded, and the pale faces of the dead. Those who knew the boy speak much of



Sam's Father

his courage and faithfulness. "His record was such," writes one, "that when Bragg ordered the organization of a company of scouts by Gen. B. F. Cheatham, Sam Davis was chosen as one of the number because of his coolness and daring and power of endurance." Capt. H. B. Shaw was given command of these scouts, and the field of their earlier endeavor was Middle Tennessee, which in 1863 was practically in the hands of the Federals.

Captain Shaw assumed a disguise within the Federal lines, posing as an itinerant doctor and bearing the name of "Dr. E. Coleman" among the Federals and of "Capt. E. Coleman, Commander of Scouts," among the Confederates, even in his official communications to General Bragg, this double deception being deemed necessary to the prosecution of his dangerous duty as a spy. Scout or spy, whatever the term applied, one who enters the lines of the enemy to secretly gather information for use of the oppos-

ing army under the rules of warfare becomes a "spy," and if caught is executed as a spy. There is no mawkish sentiment in war, and small mercy is shown one who seeks to discover the secrets of the enemy.

But, as with Major Andre of the Revolution and with many others, the occupation of scout and spy is a necessity of warfare to which any soldier is liable and upon which no just odium can be cast. No soldier of the Revolution, from Washington down, condemned the gallant young officer who, under military law, died bravely as a spy. On the contrary, one who, under the hard usage of the camp, is commissioned as a military spy is usually chosen because of superior intelligence, courage, and devotion to his army and colors. His vocation is full of deadly peril by day and by night. If caught, he usually dies by the most ignominious death under conditions that inspire contempt in the spectators, to the end that swift judgment and odious death may deter men from seeking the office of the spy. Over his supreme self-sacrifice the epitaph is commonly written, "Died on the gallows as a spy," without those added words which justice demands: "Under military appointment and for his country's cause."

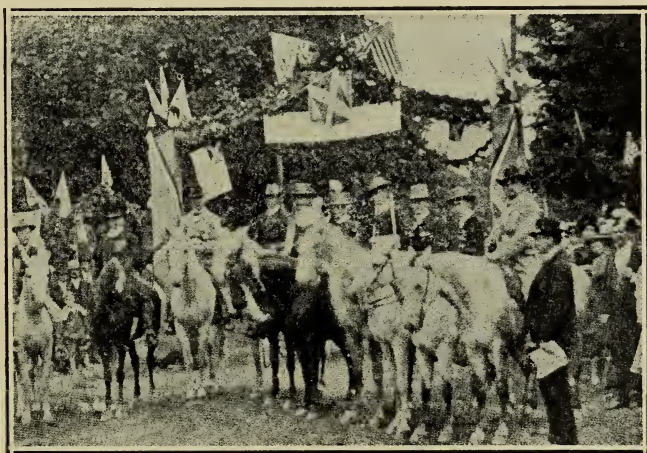
It fell to the lot of my Tennessee hero to be assigned to "Cap-



Captain Shaw

tain Coleman's Scouts" and given a place of peculiar difficulty and danger, soon to terminate in death. The appointing officer said it was the "boy's record" that gave prominence and promo-

tion to one so young. He had learned as a country boy two hard lessons that few men learn in a lifetime: to fear nothing and nobody but God, and to obey orders. He had a peculiarly bright and winning way about him, an utterly fearless eye, a frank and gentle speech, and the self-poise of a great soul. Next to his God, above even his tender love for his mother and home, Sam cherished that old-time sense of "honor" so sacred among the traditions of the old South, when one's "word of honor" meant more than wealth or fame or life itself. Do not confuse this honor with that other folly of Southern hotspurs—the dishonor of the code duello, long ago in disgrace among the sons of those



Group of Veterans Where Sam Was Executed.

who condoned its brutality, the one thing in its defense being that by sight and sound of pistol it compelled a certain class of men to be more circumspect in what they said and did. The honor which gives my hero place among the immortals was of the kind that sought not the life of another in revenge, but gave one's life in devotion to duty.

In November, 1863, the 16th Army Corps, under Gen. G. M. Dodge, was centered at Pulaski, Tenn., not far from the Tennessee River and the Alabama line. General Dodge had started from Corinth, Miss., to Chattanooga, Tenn., to re-enforce General

Grant. On all roads his cavalry kept sharp lookout, especially to break to pieces the Coleman band of scouts, who were here and there, watching every movement of the Federals, and by persistent and accurate reports to General Bragg were making havoc of General Dodge's peace and plans—so much so that the General put on its mettle the famous Kansas 7th Cavalry, nicknamed the "Jayhawkers," to run to earth and capture Coleman and his scouts. So active and alert was the entire corps that capture was at most a matter of a few days only.

Captain Shaw, alias Coleman, summoned Davis and committed to his care certain papers, letters, reports, and maps giving late and important news to General Bragg. In his shoes and in the saddle seat were hidden the dangerous documents; and Sam, with Coleman's pass, started southward to Decatur, thence to take the "scout line" to the headquarters of General Bragg. His last route began and ended Thursday, November 19. Run down and arrested at the Tennessee River by the "Jayhawkers," along with other prisoners, he was hurried to Pulaski, and by night was in jail. Elsewhere, on the same day, Captain Shaw himself was captured and imprisoned also in the town. Davis's papers and reports were placed in the hands of General Dodge, who twice had him brought to his headquarters, urging him in strong but kindly way to disclose the name of the one who had committed to him the captured papers.

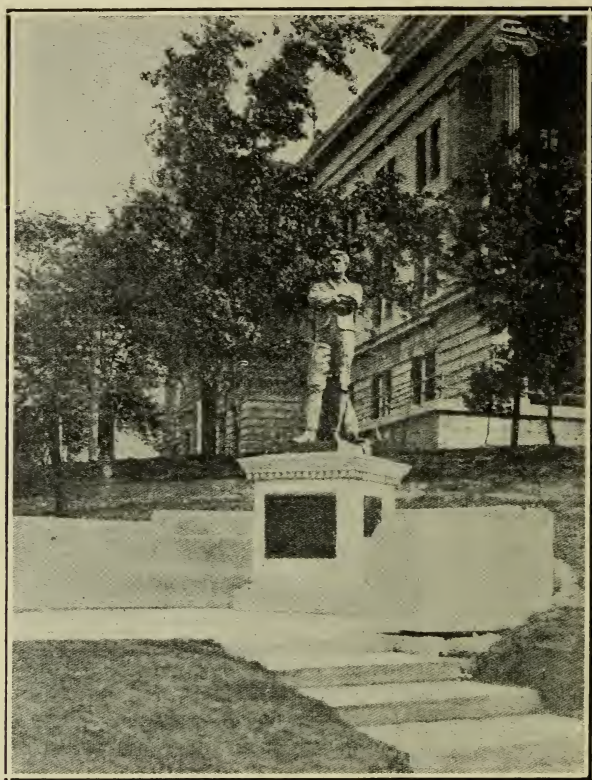
It is worth while to know who General Dodge was, and what he thought of the young fellow whose life was now in the General's hands. Dodge was born in Massachusetts, and is yet living in Iowa, to which State at twenty he removed. At the breaking out of the Civil War he was made colonel of the 4th Iowa Infantry, and later brigadier general. He was a close and trusted friend of General Grant, and was chosen grand marshal of the Grant monument parade in New York City in 1897. For many years after the war he was a resident of New York as capitalist of large affairs and citizen of distinguished ability.

As shown throughout the Davis tragedy, General Dodge was proven to have been a man of kindly spirit. Something about the Tennessee boy evidently touched the General's heart. Only recently he wrote at length to the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, pay-

ing long-cherished tribute to Davis's memory. He says of him that "he was a fine, soldierly-looking young man, dressed in a faded Federal coat, an army soft hat, and top-boots; he had a fresh, open face, which was inclined to brightness; in all things he showed himself a true soldier; it was known by all the command that I desired to save him. I appreciate fully that the people of the South and Davis's comrades understand his soldierly qualities, and propose to honor his memory. I take pleasure in contributing to a monument to his memory." And with it came the General's personal check. Of Davis's arrest and trial he further writes: "I was very anxious to capture Coleman and break up his command." (General Dodge did not know, nor did any Confederate prisoner in the Pulaski jail give the slightest hint, that the "H. B. Shaw" captured the same day as Davis, and probably prisoner in the same building with him, was the veritable "Coleman" himself.) "I had Davis brought before me. His captors knew that he was a member of Coleman's Scouts, and I knew what was found upon him, and desired to locate Coleman and ascertain, if possible, who was furnishing information so accurate and valuable to General Bragg. Davis met me modestly. I tried to impress on him the danger he was in, and as only a messenger I held out to him the hope of lenient treatment if he would answer truthfully my questions. I informed him that he would be tried as a spy and the evidence would surely convict him, and I made a direct appeal to him to give me the information I knew he had. He very quietly but firmly refused to do it. I pleaded with him with all the power I possessed to give me some chance to save his life. I discovered that he was a most admirable young fellow, with the highest character and strictest integrity. He replied: 'I know, General, that I will have to die; but I will not tell where I got the information, and there is no power on earth that can make me tell. You are doing your duty as a soldier, and if I have to die I shall be doing my duty to God and my country.'"

There was nothing more that General Dodge could do. A military commission was convened within three days, which tried Davis and sentenced him as a spy to death on the gallows Friday, November 27, between the hours of 10 a. m. and 2 p. m.—one week from the day of his capture. You may be sure it was a long

and lonely week to the brave boy, especially those last three days that intervened between his sentence and the day of doom. Somehow, though not strangely, there sprang up in all hearts an ever-increasing interest in one who by a single word could open the



View Showing Location of Monument.

door of his prison, yet chose to die in place of another "for duty's sake." With "Coleman" probably in touch of his hand and sound of his voice, he gave no sign or hint of his identity. "He is worth more to the Confederacy than me," he said. I doubt it. The more I think of it after so many years have passed, the greater is the wonder that Shaw, alias Coleman, did not unmask and save the life of one who was sacrificing life for him. Hard by

the light that will ever shine upon Sam's pale face in this shadow that lies heavy on the face of his Captain.

Again and again Federal soldiers sought Sam in his cell, pleading with him to disclose the informer's name and save his own life. Chaplain James Young, of the 81st Ohio Infantry, was his constant visitor and comforter, to whom the last messages and tokens were committed for delivery to his home. On the last morning, "for remembrance' sake." Sam gave him the Federal overcoat that his mother had dyed, which Mr. Young lovingly kept until, in his seventy-third year, not long before his death, he sent it to the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, saying: "My promised remembrance is fulfilled. I am seventy-three years old, and could not reasonably expect to care for it much longer. I have cut off a small button from the cape, which I will keep. The night before he died we sang together 'On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,' and, as he desired, I was with him constantly, and at the end I prayed with and for him." Dear old Chaplain! He and Sam are together now under brighter skies with the Master whom they served.

Provost Marshal Armstrong, who had charge of prison and gallows, became Sam's ardent friend, and, rough soldier though he was, could scarcely perform his painful duty. Captain Chickasaw, Chief of Dodge's Scouts, also took a strong liking to the boy, and made a last effort to save him.

I have at my side a copy of a faded little war paper issued from the camp of Dodge's Corps, and it gives the Federal account of Davis's last hours on earth. "Last Friday," it reads, "the citizens and soldiery of Pulaski witnessed one of those painful executions of stern justice which make war so terrible; and though sanctioned by its usages, it is no more than brave men in their country's service expose themselves to every day." Then it goes on with its generous tribute to the young hero whom the bravest soldier might look upon with pride even upon the gallows.

I do not like to draw the last living picture of my boy. But Friday morning came all too swiftly, and at ten o'clock sharp the drums were beating, the execution guard under Marshal Armstrong was marching to the jail, while the soldiers of the 16th Corps by the thousands, with muskets in hand, were being mar-

shaled in line about Seminary Ridge, where the gallows was up-reared in waiting. A wagon, with a rough pine coffin, on which Sam Davis sat, headed the march. In sight of his fellow-prisoners Sam waved his good-by with a smiling face, and at the gallows dismounted and sat under a tree, unfalteringly looking above at the swinging noose and around at the sympathetic faces of the soldiers.

"How long have I to live, Captain Armstrong?" he inquired.

"About fifteen minutes, Sam."

"What is the news from the front?" And Armstrong told him of General Bragg's battle and defeat. "Thank you, Captain; but I'm sorry to hear it." And then, with one last quaver in his voice of loving remembrance of his comrades in gray, said: "The boys will have to fight their battles without me."

Captain Armstrong broke down. "Sam, I would rather die myself than execute sentence upon you."

"Never mind, Captain," was the gentle reply. "You are doing your duty. Thank you for all your kindness."

It was then that Captain Chickasaw came swiftly on horse, and, leaping to the ground, sat himself by Sam and pleaded in that last fierce moment of youth for the word of information that would send him to his home in freedom.

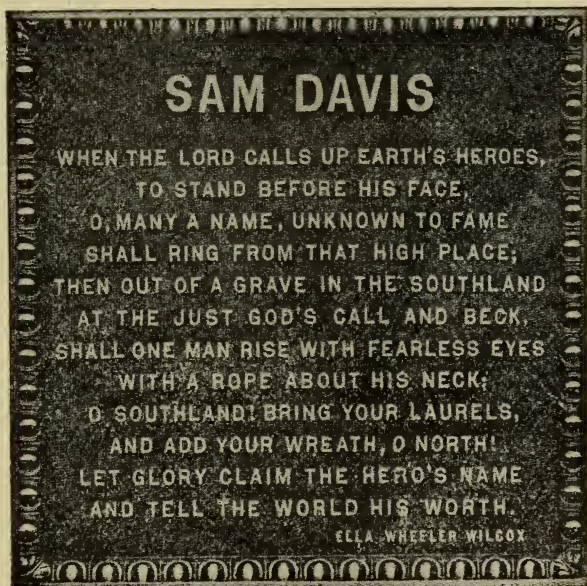
Sam arose to his feet and, with flashing eye and uplifted face, made his last answer: "No, I cannot. I would rather die a thousand deaths than betray a friend or be false to duty."

A Federal officer, who was looking into Sam's face, wrote of him long after in the *Omaha Bee*: "The boy looked about him. Life was young and promising. Overhead hung the noose; around him were soldiers in line; at his feet was a box prepared for his body, now pulsing with young and vigorous life; in front were the steps that would lead him to disgraceful death, and that death it was in his power to so easily avoid. For just an instant he hesitated, and then put aside forever the tempting offer. Thus ended a tragedy wherein a smooth-faced boy, without counsel, in the midst of enemies, with courage of highest type, deliberately chose death to life secured by means he thought dishonorable!"

The steps to the gallows were firmly mounted, and Sam's last words, "I am ready, Captain," followed the Chaplain's prayer—

when in a moment he had passed through the gates of death to take his place forever among the heroes of the Southland.

In his memory a costly and beautiful monument, surmounted by a bronze figure of the boy, has been erected in Capitol Park, in the heart of Nashville. From every State in the Union, from Blue and Gray, from rich and poor, the money to build the monument was contributed upon the plea of Editor S. A. Cunningham, of the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, whose conception it was; and many thousands will bow their heads on dedication day in loving memory of the hero of Tennessee. Sometime, when you are passing through Nashville, take a moment to look upon the noble bronze face, and then visit the old Smyrna home and in the garden see the grave of Sam as he sleeps by the side of his mother and father. And if you care to put them in your scrapbook, take the words of Ella Wheeler Wilcox from the bronze tablet on the monument.



PUBLISHED IN FEDERAL PAPER AT TIME OF SAM'S
DEATH.

(The Nashville American copies an article from the Pulaski Chanticleer of December 2, 1863. It was a paper edited by C. W. Hildreth and devoted to the interests of the left wing of the 16th Army Corps.)

Last Friday the citizens and soldiers of Pulaski witnessed one of those painful executions of stern justice which make war so horrible; and though sanctioned by the usages of war, it is no more than men in the service of their country expose themselves to every day. Samuel Davis, of Coleman's Scouts, having been found within the Federal lines with dispatches and mails destined for the enemy, was tried on the charge of being a spy, and, being found guilty, was condemned to be hanged between the hours of 10 a. m. and 6 p. m. on Friday, November 27, 1863. The prisoner was apprised of his sentence by Captain Armstrong, local provost marshal; and though somewhat surprised at the sentence of death, he did not manifest any outward signs of agitation.

Chaplain Young, of the 81st Ohio Infantry, visited the prisoner and administered spiritual consolation. The prisoner expressed himself resigned to his fate and perfectly prepared to die. He exhibited a firmness unusual for one of his age, and up to the last showed a lively interest in the news of the day, expressing regret when told of the defeat of General Brass.

The scaffold for the execution of the prisoner was built upon the ridge, east side of town, near the seminary, a position which could be seen from any part of the town.

At precisely 10 a. m. the prisoner was taken from his cell, his hands tied behind him, and, accompanied by the chaplain of the 81st Ohio Volunteers, was placed in a wagon, seated upon his coffin, and conveyed to the scaffold. Provost Marshal Armstrong conducted the proceedings. At precisely five minutes past ten o'clock the wagon containing the prisoner and the guards entered the hollow square formed by the troops, in the center of which was the scaffold. The prisoner then stepped from the wagon and seated himself upon a bench at the foot of the scaffold. He displayed great firmness, glancing casually at his coffin as it was

taken from the wagon. Turning to Captain Armstrong, he inquired how long he had to live, and was told that he had just fifteen minutes. He then remarked: "We would have to fight the rest of the battles alone." (This awkward expression is evidently an error. A quotation from his associates is as follows: "The boys will have to fight the rest of the battles without me."—Editor)

Captain Armstrong: "I am sorry to be compelled to perform this painful duty."

Prisoner with a smile: "It does not hurt me, Captain. I am innocent, though I am prepared to die, and do not think hard of it!"

Captain Chickasaw then asked the prisoner if it would not have been better for him to have accepted the offer of life upon the disclosure of the facts in his possession, when the prisoner answered with much indignation: "Do you suppose I would betray a friend? No, sir; I would rather die a thousand times first."

He was then questioned upon other matters, but refused to give any information which would be of service.

The prisoner then mounted the scaffold, accompanied by the chaplain, James Young, whom he requested to pray with him at his execution. The prisoner then stepped upon the trap, the rope was adjusted about his neck, and the cap drawn over his head. In a moment the trap was sprung, and the prisoner fell suspended in the air. For a few moments he struggled with his hands and feet; this was succeeded by a slight quivering of the body, which ceased at three and one-half minutes from the time he fell. After being suspended seventeen and one-half minutes, the officiating surgeon, D. W. Voyles, of the 6th Indiana Infantry Volunteers, pronounced the prisoner dead, and he was cut down and placed in his coffin. It was supposed from the protracted animation which the prisoner exhibited that the fall had not broken his neck and that he died by strangulation, but upon subsequent examination his neck was found to be completely broken.

So fell one whom the fate of war cut down early in youth and who exhibited traits of character which under other circumstances might have made him a remarkable friend and member of society.

ADDRESS BY GOV. PATTERSON AT UNVEILING OF
DAVIS MONUMENT.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, Fellow-Citizens:
When a boy in school at Nashville I witnessed the ceremonies of the dedication of another figure in bronze on the other side of this picturesque hill, and well do I recall the awe and rapture of imaginative youth as my eyes beheld for the first time a heroic figure on horseback—an incarnate force of action. The man and the horse seemed born one for the other—the one a master with the erect and easy grace of martial bearing and conscious power of rule, the other as if proud to bear his weight, restive for action and breathing the very fire of war.

Little did I think then, even in the daydreams of youth, that one day as Governor I would be called upon to accept in the name of the State another figure in bronze erected on this side of the grounds, not of a man on horseback, but of a young man scarcely more than a boy, who belonged to another and later age of our history, who stands without the marks and accoutrements of rank, without any other sign save that of a soldier ready to fight and ready to die. The name and fame of Andrew Jackson fill the mind with wonder and admiration; the memory of Sam Davis, with infinite love and tenderness.

This tablet in front records on its enduring face the fact that Sam Davis was born on October 6, 1842, near Murfreesboro, in Rutherford County, Tenn. His life was short. It scarcely began to unfold before it ended on the scaffold at Pulaski on the morning of November 27, 1863. Sprung from a splendid race, he was of a large family of children, and grew from infancy to youth in the purest of all atmospheres, that of a Southern country home, presided over by a Southern wife and mother.

From a gentleman who knew Sam Davis well and who married one of his sisters I have this information as to his appearance and some of his characteristics. He seemed to have filled every conception of the flower and chivalry of young manhood, and his very presence was suggestive of romance and valorous deeds. His habits were pure, his affections strong, his disposition singularly quiet and reticent. In stature he was just six feet tall, slender and

finely proportioned, with regular features and an expression of mingled strength and refinement. His eyes were dark and aglow with intelligence, his hair almost black, his figure erect as if it scorned the low and base, his manners gentle as become the brave.

After receiving some education at home and in his native county, Sam Davis was sent to the old Military Institute at Nashville, and while there he heard the sound to arms, which reverberated from every mountain side, swept over every plain, and echoed in every valley as the South called for her sons to rally in defense of home and native land. And they came. They came from the seaboard, they came from the towns, from the fields, from the



Assembled Crowd at Time of Dedication of the Monument.

hills and glades, from the churches and the schools, and they were the bravest of the brave and the truest of the true. In that great army which gathered beneath the most gallant flag that ever waved in the breeze and led by the greatest soldier who ever drew a sword was this Southern boy, the product of Southern soil and Southern environment.

He enlisted as a member of Company A, 1st Tennessee Regiment, and in 1863 was assigned for duty to the scouting party under the command of Captain Shaw, of General Cheatham's Division. Shaw as commander of the scout went by the name of

Coleman. We can well understand why Davis should have had such a duty to perform, for the scout must be self-reliant and self-poised, a good horseman, intelligent, and, above all, a man to be trusted in every emergency and in every peril.

Tennessee was then within the Federal lines, and Captain Shaw intrusted to Davis certain papers and maps giving important and accurate information of the movements, strength, and fortifications of the enemy, and these were to be delivered to General Bragg, whose headquarters were at Missionary Ridge. The mission on which he was sent was full of hazard. The chances of capture and death were many; those of success were few. But the stout young heart never quailed, and boldly he entered the enemy's lines without a thought of personal danger, with no other feeling animating his bosom save duty, and without a hope save to perform it well.

When about fifteen miles below Pulaski he was intercepted and captured by a detachment from a Kansas regiment, and upon being searched a letter to General Bragg was found in one of his boots, maps and descriptions of fortifications in his saddle seat, and other papers upon his person. These were delivered to General Dodge, commanding the Federal forces, and Davis was hurried to Pulaski and lodged in jail. The papers in possession of Davis were so accurate and the information so important that General Dodge suspected they had been given by one of his own officers, and he was very solicitous to know from Davis himself where and from whom the papers had been obtained.

He was taken to headquarters and closely questioned by the commanding general, who, failing to get the responses he wished, finally said to him: "You are a young man and do not seem to realize your situation." And to this Davis replied: "I know my danger and am willing to take the consequences." Evidently struck with the lofty and intrepid spirit and the manly bearing of one so young, and wishing if possible to save his life, General Dodge explained that he would have to be court-martialed under the laws of war and that the sentence of death would certainly be inflicted, but that he would save his life if he would give the information which he asked.

Davis never hesitated, for to his knightly soul the bargain was

a dishonorable one, to sell his honor for his life. With modesty, but with decision written in every lineament of his face, he answered: "I know that I will have to die, but I will not tell where I got the information, and there is no power on earth that can make me tell. You are doing your duty as a soldier and I am doing mine. If I have to die, I will do so feeling I am doing my duty to my God and my country."

General Dodge offered still another chance to save his life, but Davis made the interview final when he said: "It is useless to talk to me; I do not intend to do it. You can court-martial me or do anything else you like, but I will not betray the trust reposed in me." With the inborn courtesy of a man whom promise could not betray or danger make afraid, this young knight of the South thanked General Dodge for the interest he had shown, and was led back to the prison to await his doom. A court-martial was ordered, and under its stern mandate the sentence of death was passed in the most ignominious form.

Davis had expected that he would be shot as a soldier; but the sentence was that he be hung as a spy, and the hours of the execution were fixed between the hours of ten in the morning and two in the evening. He received the sentence of the military tribunal with composure, and never once did he give way to lamentation or useless grief. His thoughts were busy, though, and they flew back to home and mother. The invisible chord was touched, whose music is sweeter than any lute touched by mortal hand, and from his soul came one last pure tone before the casket which held the jewel of an immortal life fell and was broken forever. On the night before his execution he wrote this farewell to his mother from his prison cell:

"PULASKI, GILES COUNTY, TENN., NOV. 26, 1863.

"*Dear Mother:* O, how painful it is to write you! I have got to die tomorrow morning—to be hanged by the Federals. Mother, do not grieve for me. I must bid you good-by forevermore. Mother, I do not fear to die. Give my love to all.

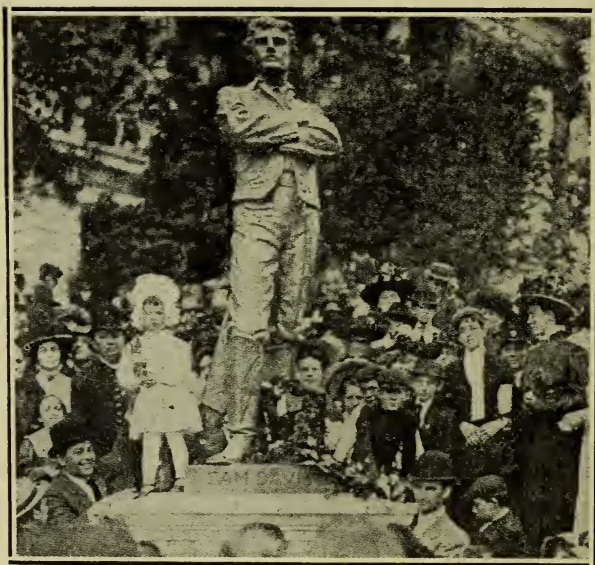
"Your son,

SAMUEL DAVIS."

This breathes the love of his heart, and is in full accord with his fine, manly nature. There is no complaint, no bravado, no fierce invective against his captors, no storm of passion against his ac-

users, no craven fear of death. In simple, unadorned statement the awful fate which the day will bring, in forgetfulness of self, in the last wish that there shall be no useless brief, but that he shall not be forgotten when dead, this boy seems to have been endowed with a spirit above mortality, and an angel must have come from on high to have guarded him that night, and sweet were the dreams which came to the soldier boy.

When the morning sun of an autumn day rose above the encircling hills in one of the most entrancing portions of Tennessee and light had scattered the black legions of the night, the boy rose



At the Monument After the Dedication

even as a son of light, clear as its rays, beautiful as its myriad forms. Early in the morning the drumbeats are heard vexing the air with ominous and baleful sounds. Men in blue uniforms are hurrying in rank. The regiment is formed, arms are shouldered, the bugle is sounded, the march is begun. It was not necessary—only a useless formality of war—to send so many men against one defenseless boy; but all the soldiers who ever trod the earth could not make him afraid, for his heart was pure as Arthur's of

the Round Table, his courage as high as all the legions of Julius Caesar.

A wagon was driven up to the jail. Davis was escorted from his cell and climbed upon it. Standing erect, he looked around and waved his hands to two other Confederate prisoners who had been captured and who were confined in another part of the jail. This alone would be enough to show the utter absence of fear, the cool collection of all his faculties. And when the curtain has rung down upon this act in the noblest drama the world has seen of all life's tragedies, we might dismiss the two Confederates who were left in the prison, as they do those characters on the mimic board who, having played their small parts, are heard and seen no more. But fate has woven these two into the very texture of the story of this immortal death.

One of them was Joshua Brown, a fellow-scout, who had also been captured by the Federals and who has lived to add his testimony to these stirring events; while the other was Captain Shaw, the chief of scouts, the very person who had given the papers to Davis with instructions to deliver them to General Bragg. Here again each succeeding scene heightens in human interest, the color becomes deeper, and Davis looms in heroic form greater and greater with each passing moment. It is said that Brown and Shaw knew of the terms of the offer of life to Davis; and when the salutation came, Shaw exclaimed as if answering the question which he himself had asked and upon which his life depended: 'He will never tell.'

General Dodge said that he did not know until after Shaw had been sent to the North as a prisoner of war that he was the person who had given the papers and information to Davis to be carried to Bragg, and that if Davis had told him his own life would surely have been saved and that Shaw would have met his fate. But why, some may ask, did not Shaw himself cry out when he saw this boy led to his death: "I alone am responsible; this young man was under my orders; he only obeyed; if any one is to die, let it be me?"

Ah, it was asking too much, for Shaw, brave as he was and willing as thousands are to meet death when it comes, like millions more, would avert it until the last hour, for his life was

more precious to him than the life of another man. But if Shaw hung in his stead and the story of Damon and Pythias, coming down to us from the mists of antiquity, would have been re-had possessed the heart and soul of Davis he would have been peated; but not in all respects, for in the ancient story both the friends were saved and in the modern one must surely die, for Dionysius, tyrant though he was, could spare for fidelity, but war knows neither age nor youth nor pity. Shaw acted just as others would have acted.

Davis acted as only he could act. He sat on the coffin in the wagon which was to hold his body when his spirit had fled, and no king in the robes of purple was ever more princely than this young man in his faded uniform, and none has ever lived to rule a people who had as fine a soul beneath the royal robe, for Davis gave his life, and it was all he had to give. To save it was worth to him all the domains of all the rulers of earth. It was above the price of all the jewels that ever glittered in coronets. But, precious as it was, it was not worth his honor and his sense of duty. When the scaffold is reached Davis mounts it as if he is ascending a throne. He asks with perfect composure how long he has to live, and is told that fifteen minutes is all of life that is left.

There is the dangling rope that is to strangle the fair young throat and stop the parting breath. Davis asks for news of the war, and is told of the reverses of the Confederates at Missionary Ridge. He expresses his regret, and then with a tinge of sadness says: "The boys will have to fight their battles without me."

The hearts of his executioners were melted with pity that one so young had to die, and the duty which stern war had imposed upon them could not prevent the signs from being manifested. The executioner even apologized for his cruel work, then Davis assured him that he did not blame him, that he knew he was only doing his duty. A courier was sent from the headquarters of General Dodge, and again his life was offered to him for his secret; but he again refused to divulge it, and finally said: "I would die a thousand deaths before I would betray a friend."

How sweet it is to live! how hard it is to die! What efforts do we make to ward off the end! How we struggle with brain and hand for existence, for the world's triumphs and its joys! How

we ply the oar blades in those frail barks which hold mortality and resist as long as we can the onward sweep of the waters of that strange river which poets call the river of life! But whether we will or not, our boats sail out on the mystic sea, vanish from sight, and from out of the darkness never a light is seen. Did this young man want to live as he stood there like a day god and saw the dangling noose, the mark of infamy and civilization's badge of barbarism? His mind was clear, the blood of youth was coursing and leaping in his veins. He had built his castle in the air.



Memorial Service at the Davis Home,

Life was before him and earth around him, with its untasted joys, its unknown sorrows; mother at home and loved ones were not far away. But this boy gave them all for his honor, and looked death in the face without a murmur and without a tremor. The minutes flew, the clock struck, the noose is adjusted, the black cap is drawn, and the slender figure, unspotted with sin, is writhing and twisting between earth and heaven. The bells ceased ringing, the red currents stopped and congealed in their courses, all motion ceased, death had come, the bark was out at sea, and the "breathing miracle into silence passed."

How can I speak of this man and his death? What power can

come to me to tell of the pathos, the deep meaning of it all? It is above and beyond the power of words. It rises from the earth and reaches heaven. As looking upon the restless billows of the ocean or the blue of the sky, the mind cannot formulate its musings or express the thoughts which are stirred, but falls back weary, dejected, mystified, and all the philosophers of the world, all of the cults, all our faith cannot help us to understand. But the sea and the sky are so familiar that only once and anon do their mysteries come upon us with profound and conscious force, accentuating our smallness in the divine plan, leaving us like children in the dark, without a hand to guide.

So it is with the life and death of Davis. They are familiar to every schoolboy in Tennessee, the theme of orators and the subject of verse. But at last when the mind, chased of all fugitive thoughts and purged of all grossness, views the scaffold and the rope, we see at our very doors a scene which for human grandeur and sublimity reaches the ultimate of human conception, and in the sweep of years will grow to yet more splendid proportions. No one with brush or chisel or pen, with thought or tongue of eloquence is able to reach the heights which this boy trod when he gave his innocent life that day. Blind Homer, who sang the story of Troy; Milton, who told of the loss of Paradise; Shakespeare, who sounded every depth and touched every shore of humanity, nor all the other masters can nothing add and nothing take from the simple majesty which clothes the death of Davis.

On Calvary the Son of God died with cruel nails driven through his quivering flesh, the crown of thorns pressing down upon his agonized brow, and since then the cross has been the Christian's sign in every land; and which of us has the right to say that He who created the earth and the sky and every living thing on sea and land, whose mysteries baffle, but whose providence is over all, could give the son of Mary to teach men how to live could not also give this son of Tennessee to teach men how to die?

Before concluding I wish to invite your attention to what seems to me a beautiful and most appropriate conception of the committee who have had charge of this work and who have so unselfishly and patriotically performed their labors. The figure of Sam Davis when the veil is lifted, will reveal the genius of the sculptor and

will stand, as will be observed, on a pedestal and surrounded by marble quarried from the hills of Tennessee in the center of a heart-shaped inclosure, suggesting at once the thought that his name and memory live in the great heart of his native State, from whose dust he came and to whose dust he has returned.

This spot will be sacred evermore to those who love the pure, the true, the brave, for it is dedicated to the knightly tenants of the soul. Let mothers bring their children here to learn the story of his young life and triumphant death, to know that brave men never really die, that truth is worth more than gold, that honor is more precious than life. Let those of us who have put on the armor, met in the shock of life's conflict, dealt and received wounds, now gather at this shrine, forget the petty rivalries which gnaw at the soul and fetter the pinnions of noble aspiration, and at the feet of Sam Davis remember that we too are Tennesseans; that here we meet on common ground, and from this holy precinct let us go to forgive and forget. With his memory and its pervading inspiration let us face the future and bring to the service of our State and our country a higher measure of responsibility, deeper and truer conceptions of duty.

In the name of Tennessee, illustrious in peace and war, whose star has shone resplendently in the glorious canopy of the Union for more than a century of time, and whose luster is undimmed by the passing years, I receive this statue of her soldier boy.

I speak for every living man who wore the gray, whose sands of life are running swift and low, on whose ears soon the last command will come to pitch their white tents on the silent fields and wait for the resurrection morn; for the dead who sleep and molder in unknown graves from the Potomac to the Southern Seas, whose names may be forgotten, but whose deeds will live in song and story until the waves of time shall break upon the deathless shores; for the South, the shades of whose immortals roam the earth in high procession—stronger for every danger she has passed, richer for every son whose blood was shed, dearer for every tear that has fallen from the eyes of love, more beautiful for every scar that was made.

But when I speak of these, let me recall, for we should never forget, those are rare women of the elder day, who bore the

bravst sons the world has seen, typified by the sainted mother who brought this, her firstborn, into the world, who heard his first weak cry, who nourished him at her breast and crooned the lullaby which hushed him to slumberland, whose spirit long ago joined her boy in Paradise and rests with him in eternal bowers of bliss and shares with him the smile of the living God.

UNION SOLDIER ABOUT SAM DAVIS

BY REV. A. W. BILL, MENOMINEE, MICH.

I hope it will not be an intrusion if an old Presbyterian minister expresses his satisfaction that a monument has been erected to commemorate the fidelity of young Sam Davis to what he considered honor and duty.

In November, 1863, I was on duty with my regiment, the 66th Illinois Infantry, at Pulaski, Tenn. I was a private serving on special detail. The morning of November 27 broke fair and warm. We heard that a spy was to be executed and that he had been offered freedom if he would divulge the names of traitors who gave information to the enemy. He refused to do this.

Presently the assembly was sounded. Men fell into line and marched silently into town and to the brow of a hill on the left of the road. There stood a rude gallows. I went near. Over at the guardhouse a detachment of men with fixed bayonets began to move, and there was the sound of muffled rolling of drums. A horse and wagon was in the midst, a young man, his hands tied behind him.

At the scaffold steps Davis got out and met a man and woman who I supposed were his father and mother. They conversed briefly, then Davis walked quietly up the steps and stood on the trap. The sergeant approached to tie his feet and blindfold him. Davis seemed to speak. The sergeant paused. Davis lifted his face and gazed long and steadily at the hills and fields and sky. Then it was that I saw the noble profile, the black eyes, the close-pressed lips, the white, white face of a young man only two years and a little older than myself, and who might have been earlier a playmate had I lived in Tennessee, and then my heart gave way.

Davis made a sign, the sergeant placed the cap over his face, the trap was sprung, there was a convulsive drawing up of the knees, a whirling of the body—and Davis was gone.

The troops marched silently, sadly to camp, and I heard many say later: "I wish that man could have gotten away." So did I wish in my heart, and to this day, after all these years, the tears come to my eyes when I think of young Sam Davis. I am glad he has a monument.

What an ordeal our torn nation went through! I suppose it had to be. The God of your fathers and mine decided, brave men thrashed out the issue at the bayonet point, and we abide the decision; but the memorials, South and North, attest to an old soldier some sorrows that no one knows who was not there. You know all this, but it does my old heart good to write it.

**LETTER FROM GEN. DODGE, UNDER WHOM DAVIS
WAS COURT-MARTIALED AND EXECUTED**

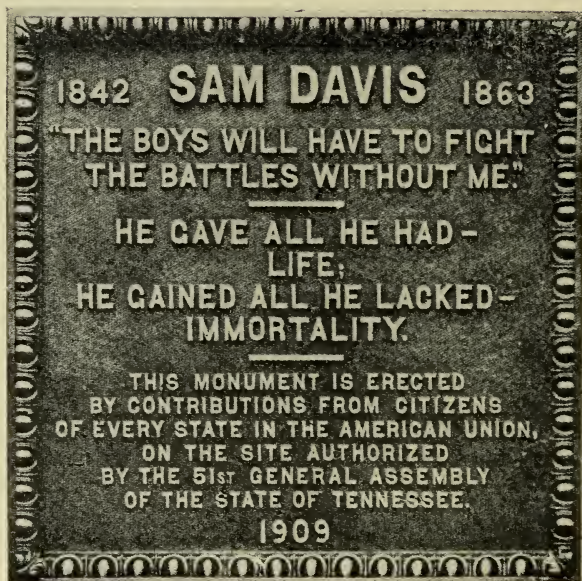
Council Bluffs, Iowa, January 27, 1911.

James F. Thompson, Griffin, Ga.

My Dear Sir:—I am in receipt of yours of January 25th, making inquiry in relation to Samuel Davis, the spy who was executed at Pulaski, Tenn. You ask if there was anything in his behavior while under arrest that would lead one to believe he was a Christian. There was nothing occurred between him and me that indicated what his religious views were. He was modest, retiring and showed respect to authority in both of my interviews with him. He evidently had a Christian faith in the cause he was serving, and in the men he was protecting. I also know that the chaplain who attended him had taken quite an interest in him, as well as Major Armstrong, who was the Provost Marshal. I think the Provost Marshal, whose name is Armstrong, instead of Anderson, is dead, but I do not know for certain.

Truly,

G. M. DODGE.



THE OLD "BLACK MAMMY."

She bends beneath the weight of years
With feeble step and slow,
Yet in her heart there throbs and shines
The light of long ago;

Of days when on her dear old face
There played an angel smile,
As in her blessed arms she held
And crooned to sleep her "Chile."

The color of a lowly race
Shown with its ebon glow,
And yet the old "Black Mammy's" soul
Was white as driven snow.

Her toilworn hands were kind and true,
Through all her bonded years,
To "Mistiss" and the little ones,
In gladness and in tears.

And through war's wearing agony,
Her heart was free from guile,
And loyal to the bitter end,
To "Mistiss and her "Chile."

Her ranks are waning year by year,
On Southern hill and plain,
And when the last "Black Mammy's" gone
She'll never come again.

Yet, somewhere on the radiant hills,
Beyond earth's woe and wile,
Her dear old arms will fold again,
"Old Mistiss" and her "Chile."

God bless her—till her weary feet
Shall touch the shining shore;
God keep her—'mind the cherubim,
At rest, forevermore.

When these tired hands are stilled at last,
And when these lips are dumb,
Think kindly of the life that's past
In beauteous years to come.
Not what I am, but what I'm not,
And all I long to be,
With faults and failings all forgot,
I pray remember me!

Consider gently each mistake
And error if you can,
This heart that fated seems to ache
With all the woes of man;
So wronged without, so weak within,
Yet striving to be free,
And how I suffered for each sin,
O, thus remember me!

How much involved in pain's alloy
Each pleasure that I knew,
How quickly o'er each beam of joy
The crowds of sorrow flew;
How every hope I cherished fled
As leaves forsake the tree.
Think how my heart in anguish bled
When you remember me!

Oppression pauses at the grave
And malice turns aside;
As calmly rests the fettered slave,
As sleeps the gentle bride;
And those who most condemn me now
Redeeming traits may see
And thus my memory endow
When they remember me!

The deep soul-hunger that I feel
They cannot understand,
Such lives attract the heedless heel
And not the helpful hand,
Because to Mammon's gilded shrine
They will not bend the knee,
But for that God-like gift divine,
Oh, love remember me!

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